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The Generation of Surrealists

Drawings and Prints: 1925-1950

BLUE MOON GALLERY

1390 Lexington Avenue New York 10028

February 21-March 28, 1970



Andre Masson 1925

19 Ink



In 1947 at the Galerie Maeght in Paris, the first post-war exhibition of Surrealism was organized by its veritable pope Andre Breton, around whom the movement as an intellectual, political and social phenomenon had been polarized since the early 1920s, and by Marcel Duchamp, its genial gray eminence. These two, one a poet, the other an artist, had abandoned their art for the most part to cultivate a separate world view, institutionally directing the heterogeneous forces grouped as surrealists. The definition of surrealism was not, however, in pronouncements by Breton or Duchamp, but in the sum of the diverse approaches and insights of many participating writers and painters over the years, even though the status of these artists in a surrealist movement was frequently vague and often totally severed. Breton was not at first interested in painters as such, but he must have quickly realized that if a picture was ever worth a thousand words, it was a surrealist picture. It was, in fact, the painters who defined surrealism in the most meaningful way it existed as an intellectual force.

Germination: 1920s

Andre Masson said in a radio interview in 1958 that one is born a surrealist. He described his first meeting with Breton who had bought one of his paintings and the subsequent introduction of his own friends into the Surrealist circle. In such ways, a group of young artists and writers, some of whom were born surrealists, got together as a formal movement late in 1924. Despite their common intellectual and sometimes active interest in promoting "revolutionary" scandal, they were talented individualists who resisted the inevitable attempts at binding solidarity. The surrealist organization thus was inherently loose although desperately trying to be tight, and this was its long-lived virtue: the surrealists were a confederation of artists rather than a party.

The first Surrealist group declaration came out in 1925. Of twenty six signatories, only Ernst and Masson were painters. By 1927, Arp, Man Ray and Tanguy had added their names to such documents. Magritte was an adherent, but in Belgium. It was Miro, however, a neighbor of Masson's who had the first surrealist-supported show in 1925. Miro and Masson (and Arp and Ernst earlier) had been painting in a cubist mode, but imposing modifications which prefigured their surrealist initiation. Their entry into the surrealist milieu evidently acted as a trigger for these tendencies which contributed to a revolution not in society but in painting. Whereas almost twenty years before, Braque and Picasso were the first to decide they would find a new way to look at objects and thus created in Cubism an objective technique and insight, the seven surrealist painters created a subjective technique by concerning themselves not with viewed objects but with psychological insights and their outward manifestations. While the surrealist poets were interested in the automatic outpouring of the mind, the painters were dramatically able to systematize it.

These original seven artists, who provided the iconography of surrealism, had several underlying elements in common: an interest in nature in its simplest and purest aspects; an awareness of a subconscious life; a sensitivity to the

existence of violence; and an inclination toward the illusionistic and the literary, but for imaginative and intuitive qualities rather than for literal ones. They were, for the most part, brilliant technicians and also important innovators. Max Ernst developed the frottage; Andre Masson perfected the "automatic" drawing and transformed the use of sand in paintings to a structure rather than a texture. Arp, whose automatic drawings from the Dada period were simple and abstract, created framed painted wood sculptures; Magritte utilized a medieval multipicture technique; Man Ray invented the Rayograph, direct exposure of objects on sensitized paper. These technical innovations were used, not for their own sake but to enhance interior ideas—intellectual, visceral or psychological. Miro and Tanguy, while not contributing technical innovations, directed their energies to the creation of totally new images and space.

Proliferation: 1930s

The arrival of Salvadore Dali on the surrealist scene signaled the expansion of the painting group that in a few years included Brauner, Dominguez, Giacometti, Seligmann, Delvaux, Bellmer, and Picasso as a sort of deus ex machina. From rather conventional and derivative early work, Dali introduced a vivid level of sexuality, full of intimations of the paranoia and irrationality which he adopted as an intellectual style. He had arrived in Paris and with his fellow Spaniard Luis Bunuel shortly made the astounding surrealist film, *Un Chien Andalou*. Both Dali and Bunuel's orientations were Freudian and sociological, perhaps the result of being free, creative spirits rooted in a rigid Spanish society; while they both have referred to *Un Chien Andalou* as a series of abstract impulsive vignettes, nowhere is their future work pointed to so explicitly as in the scene of the sexually excited young man straining to drag a piano across a room to which a bleeding stag and two Spanish priests are tied.

Picasso had been much admired and exhibited by Breton in the 1920s, but his work took a consciously surrealist turn in the 1930s. He had started to illustrate Ovid's *Metamorphoses* for Skira with a surrealist viewpoint, to which that myth-oriented work certainly lent itself. But Skira objected and Picasso evidently agreed, since he never touched the idea of metamorphosis in any of the book's thirty illustrations. While it has been the practice to associate Picasso with the surrealist Minotaur because of his cover for the first issue of the revue, his minotaurs were jolly or pathetic until he finally caught the idea with the etching (and masterpiece), *Minotaurmachy*. Nevertheless, Picasso's surrealist side was always well demonstrated, culminating in *Guernica*. And his many illustrations for surrealist poets were aptly surrealist.

Late in the 1930s, another great technician with a brilliant intellectual idea arrived on the scene: Matta brought new space and motion to the canvas and literally turned everything inside out in a non-Freudian way with his psychological morphologies. Matta demonstrated once more the ability of the surrealist group to attract and nurture great talent and great invention. Yet the 1930s saw much surrealist invention which, while making an interesting body of work,

seemed more invention for invention's sake. Decalcomania, fumage, coulage and so forth seemed to lack the inherent functionalism of the frottage and the automatic drawing. Miro started using sand paper and collage with excellent decorative effect, and the proliferation of objects including the mannequins and dolls was almost fun and games although some were strikingly esthetic. The slight lack of focus in surrealist objectives; however, was to be expected as a cost of success.

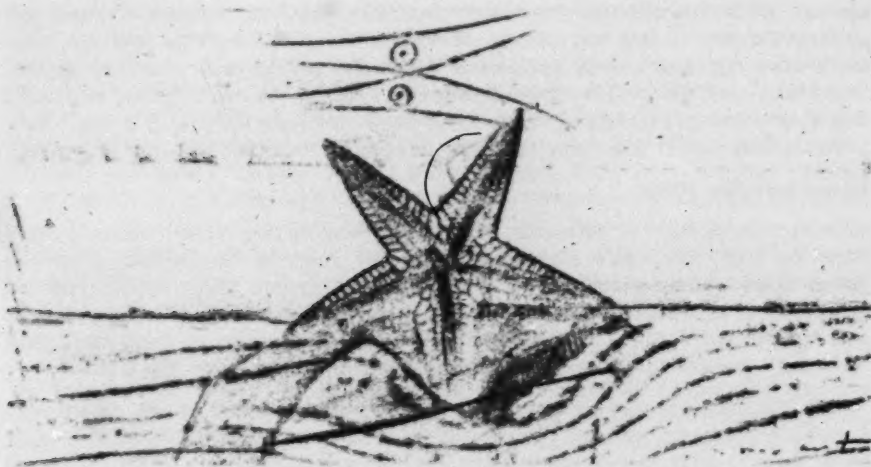
Metamorphosis: 1940s

Wifredo Lam joined the surrealists just as war was forcing them into exile from Paris. For Lam, this meant a return after twenty years to the Caribbean and his native Cuba where, at age 40, he synthesized jungle and tribal images into yet another new surrealist development infused with great inventive energy. Breton and Masson spent some time in Martinique before going on to New York, and both were greatly stimulated by the new climate, as Lam must have been.

Lam introduced totemic and magical qualities into his work at the same time that Victor Brauner, isolated in an Alpine village, was doing much the same thing but drawing in part on ancient Mediterranean symbols. In the surrealist technical tradition, Brauner began using candle wax as a material, which functioned beautifully for the primitivism coming into his imagery. Masson, also, secluding himself in the Connecticut countryside instead of New York City, became occupied with a kind of magical inner life of natural objects. He had started his series of philosophical drawings, *Mythology of Nature*, in 1938, followed by *Mythology of Being*. But in Connecticut he began to investigate hatchings, germinations, the common architecture in nature and meditations thereon, mixed in with some nature-oriented American Indian legends. And to match these new ideas, his painting style began to incorporate intense coloration in large abstract, or germinal, forms. Max Ernst's exposure to the Arizona desert during the war brought him strongly back to natural subjects in a unique manner—the use of sponges to apply paint and his tiny "microbe" paintings.

The surrealist gathering in 1947, although minus Masson, Magritte, Dalí, Delvaux and Seligmann, has subsequently been described as the funeral of Surrealism. It was more a confirmation of the end of an era, which had ended for everyone as a result of World War II. By 1947, however, one could say that the youthful influences and the surrealist milieu were definitely gone, not only because of the war but because the artists had lived through their first generation as painters, a time by which the premises of youth usually have been exhausted. A few years later the post-war world had settled down and the surrealist painters were pursuing new goals. Many of them are alive today with almost another generation of work behind them. By nature the surrealists were metamorphosis-oriented; they proceeded by change and invention. By the late 1940s, their final metamorphosis was clear. It was not that they could no longer create surrealistically but that their identity as surrealists was no longer paramount.

—L. M. Sapphire



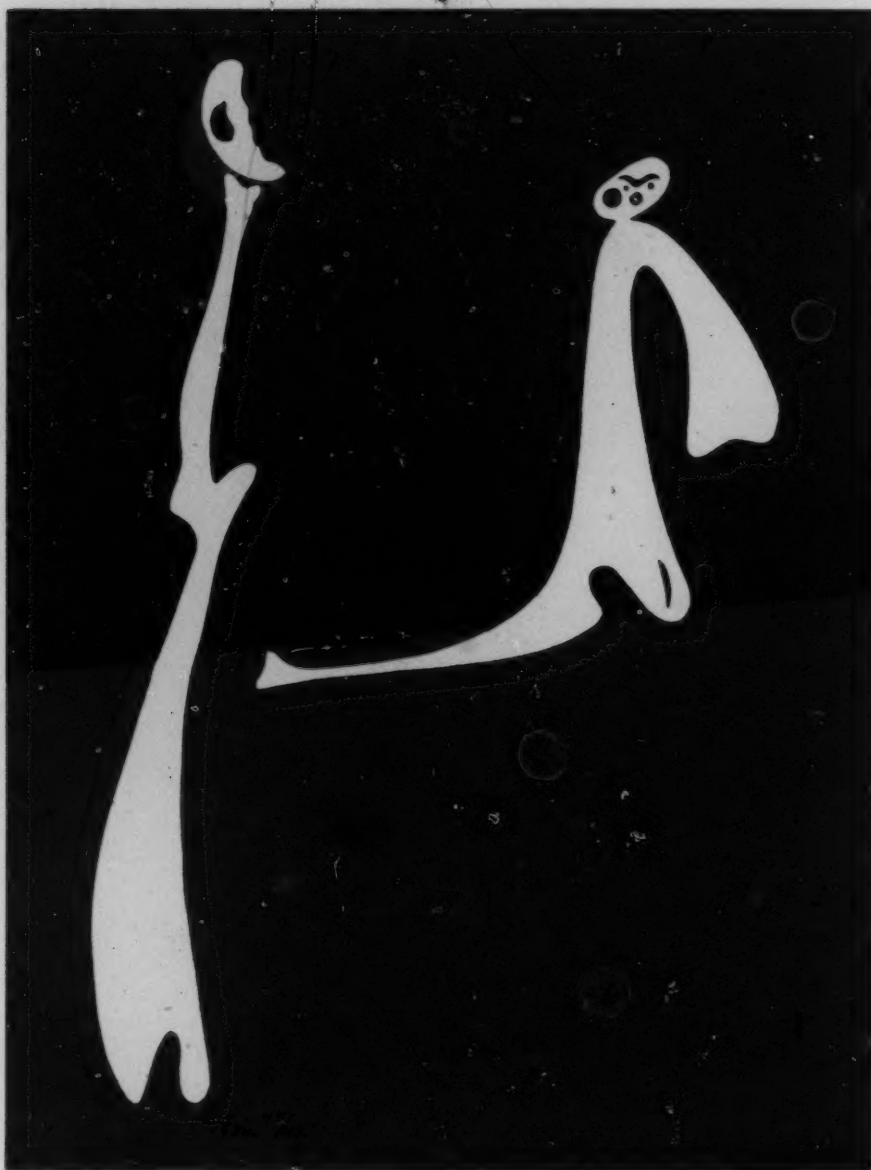
Max Ernst c. 1926

10 Pencil



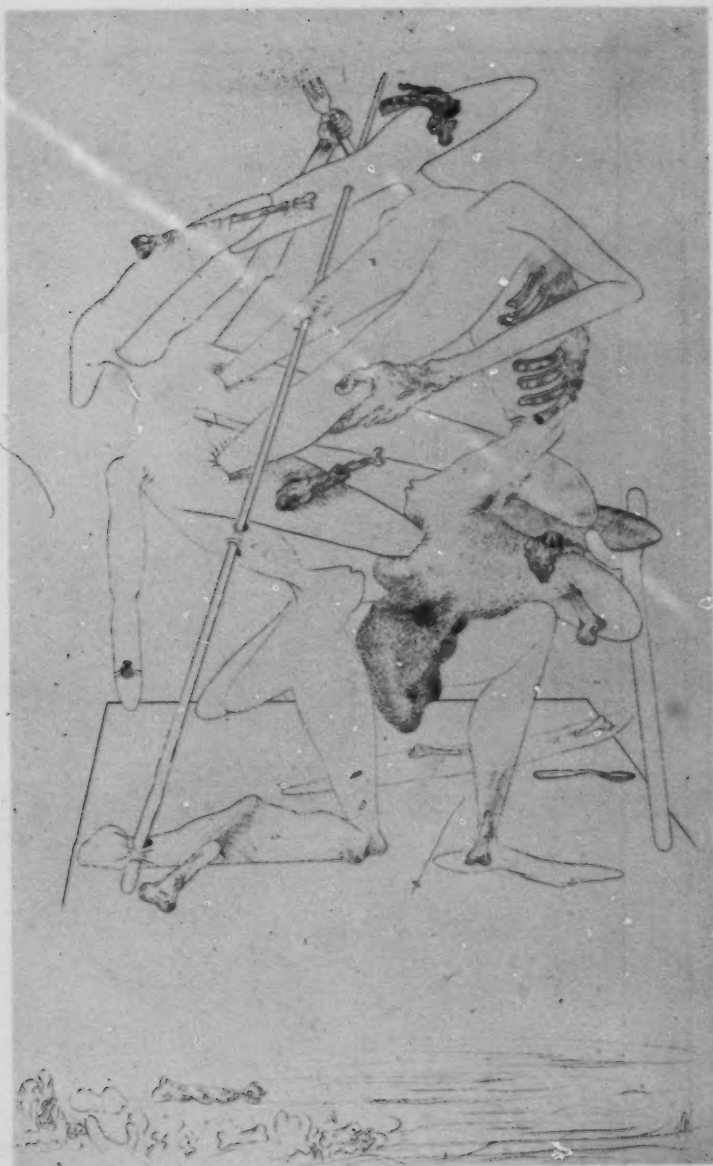
Salvatore Dali c. 1933

6 Pencil



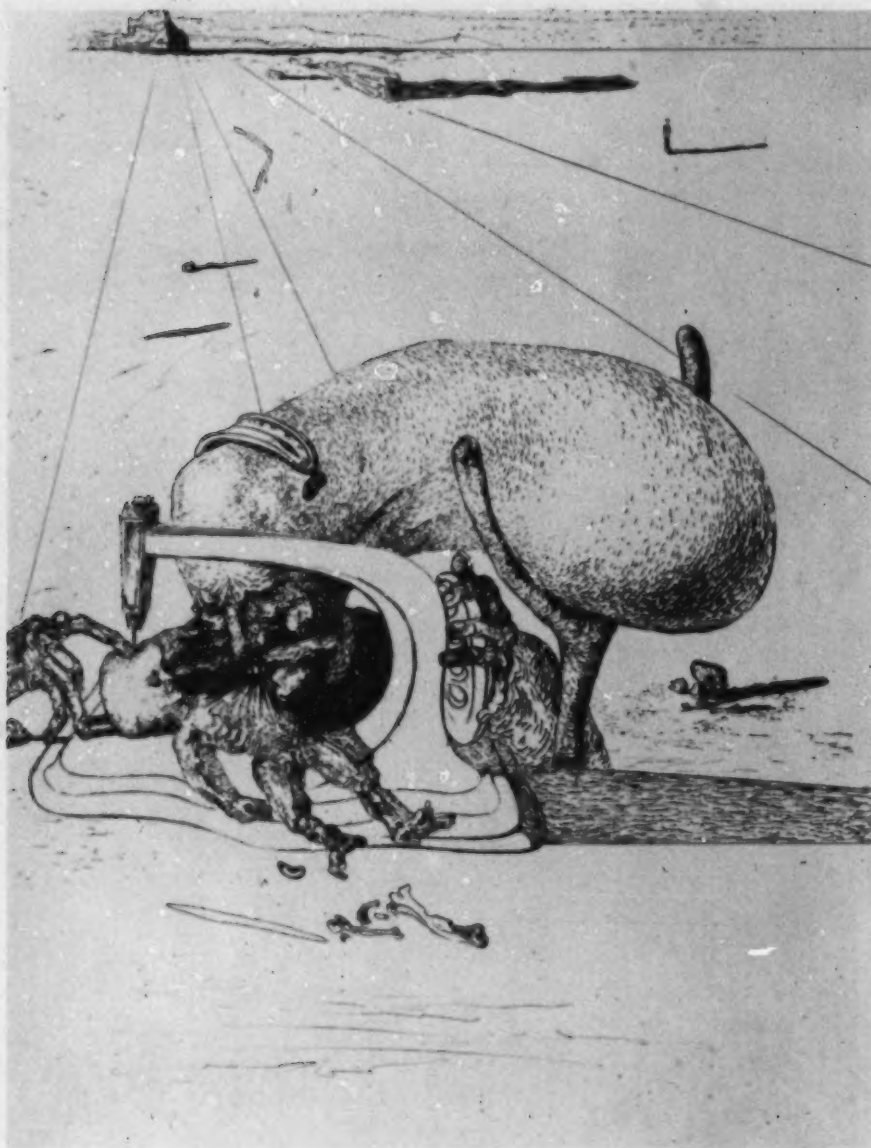
Joan Miro 1934

30 Stencil



Salvatore Dali 1934

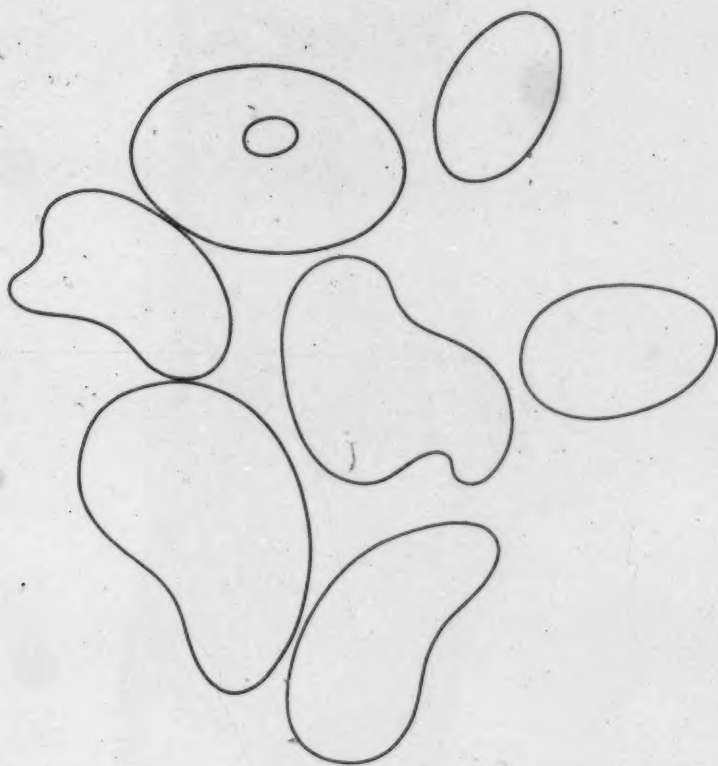
8 Etching



Salvador Dalí 1934

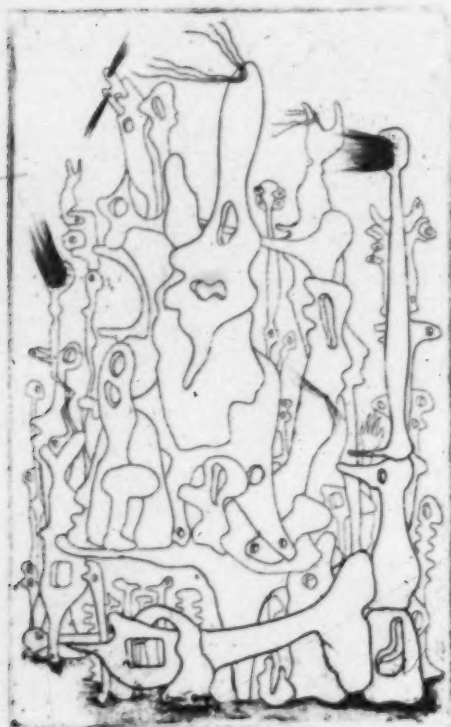
7 Etching

11



Hans Arp 1935

1 Etching



YVES TANGUY

YVES TANGUY

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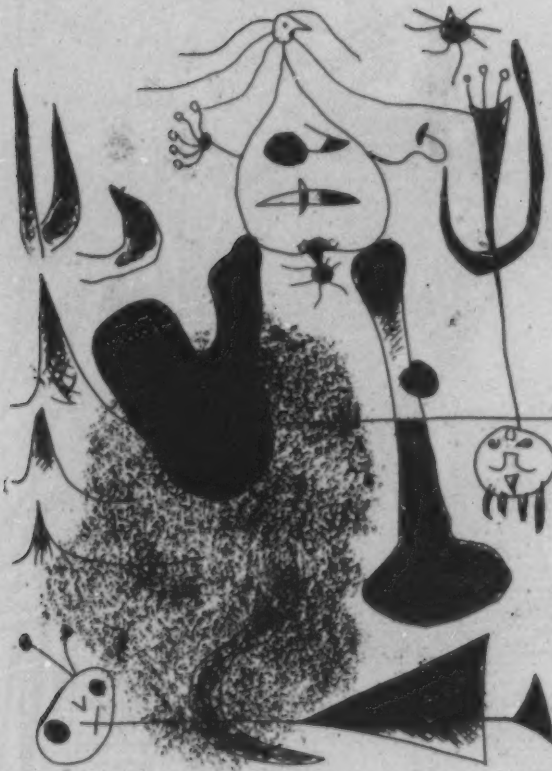
Matta c. 1937-39

26 Crayon, pencil



103
150

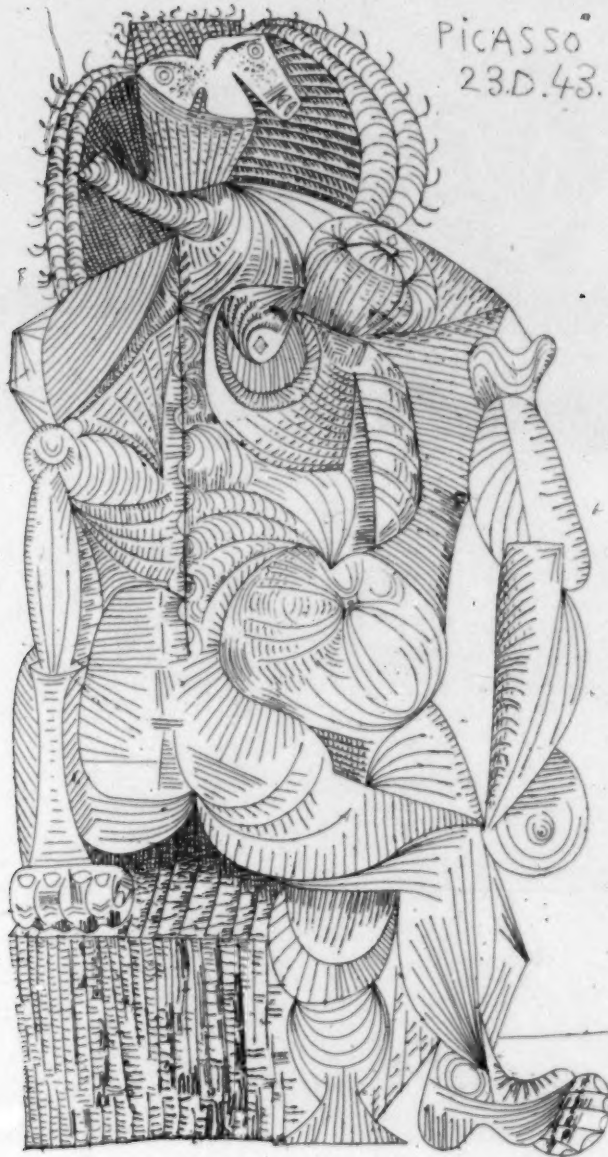
andré 'Fallon



Joan Miro 1938

31 Etching on cut pasted paper





PICASSO
23.D.43.



René Magritte c. 1945

25 Pencil



Victor Brauner 1945

4 Ink, encaustic



Wifredo Lam 1946



17 Ink



Andre Masson 1945

24 Lithograph



Wifredo Lam 1945

16 Ink



15/30

Miro.
1947

Joan Miro 1947

32 Etching



Max Ernst 1947

11 Etching

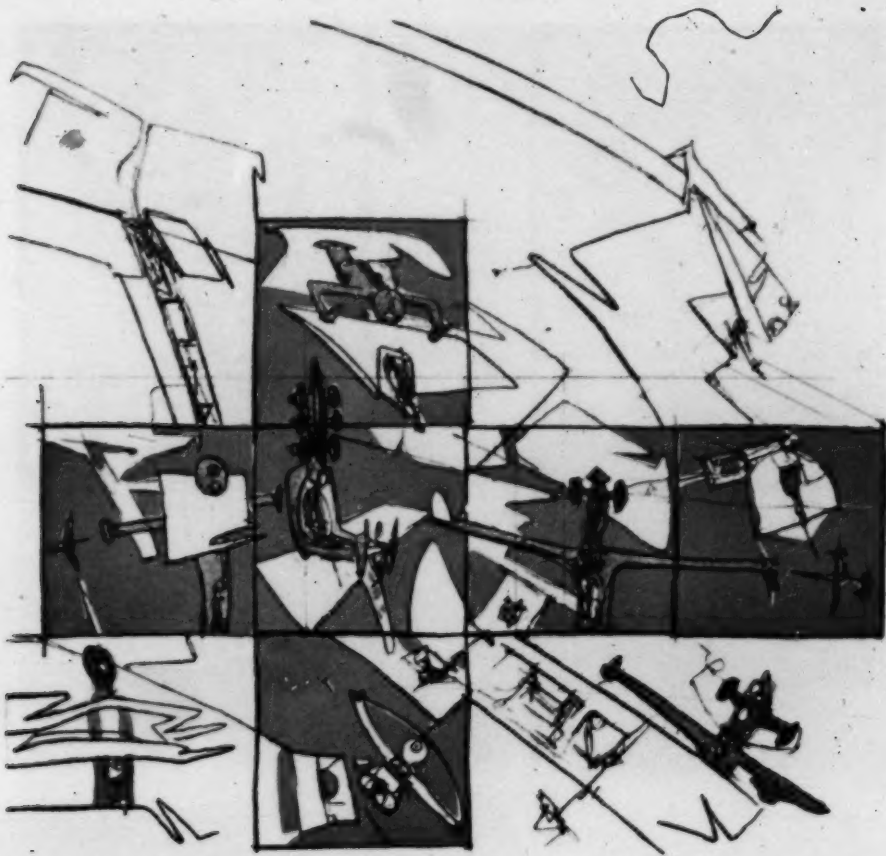


12/74

K. Seligmann

Kurt Seligmann 1947

36 Etching



Matta 1947

42/40

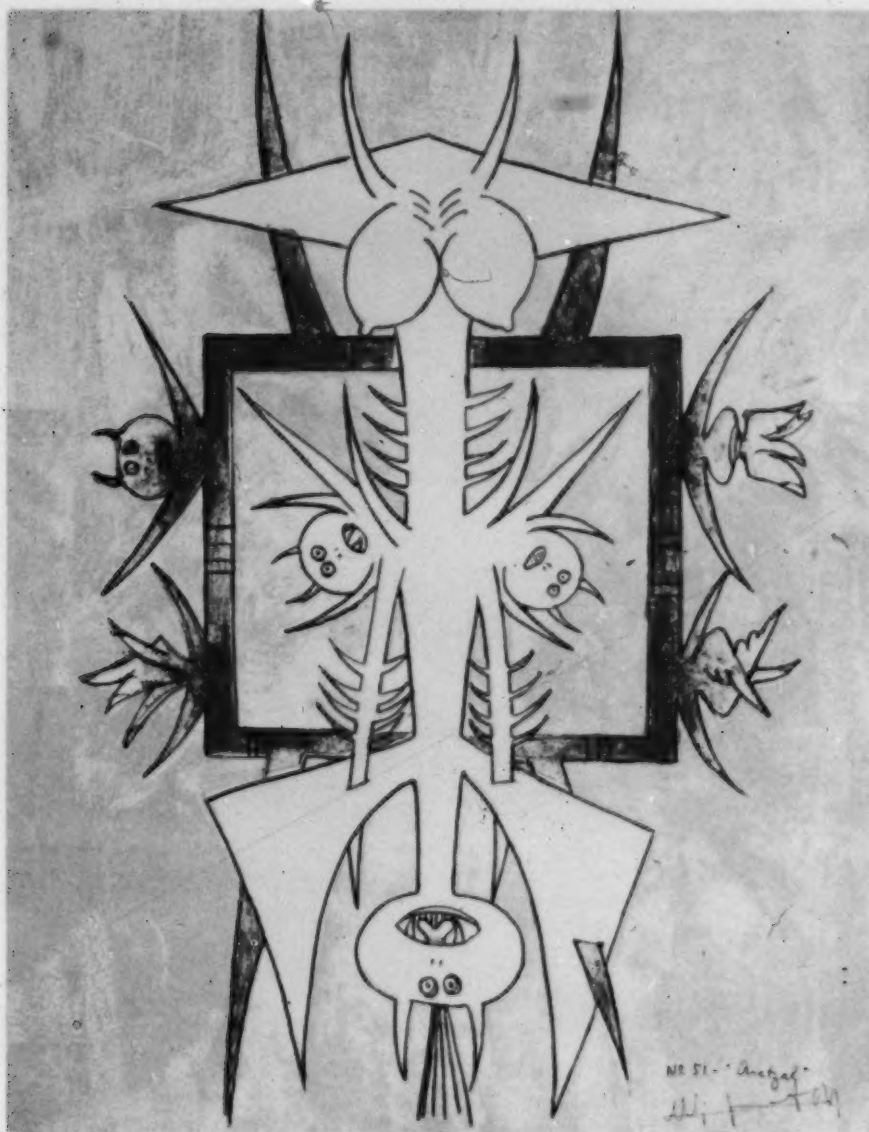
Matta 1947

28 Color lithograph



Victor Brauner 1947

5 Watercolored etchings



Wifredo Lam 1947

18 Color lithograph





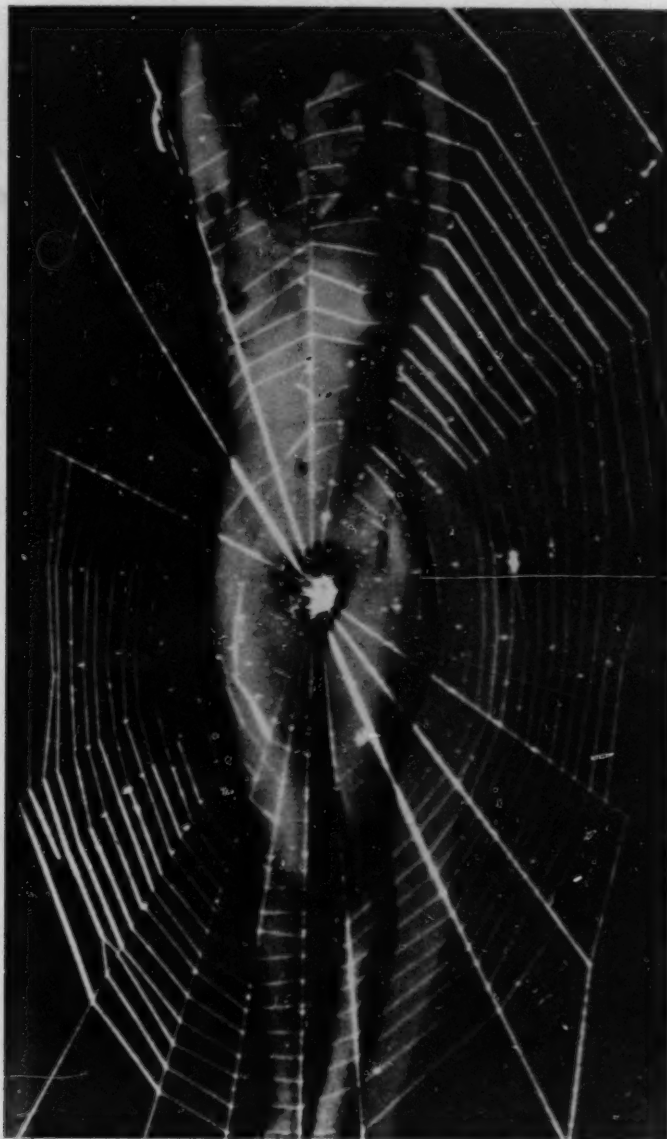
Hans Bellmer 1947

3 Color etching



Jacques Hérold c. 1948

15 Color lithograph



1/125

Man Ray

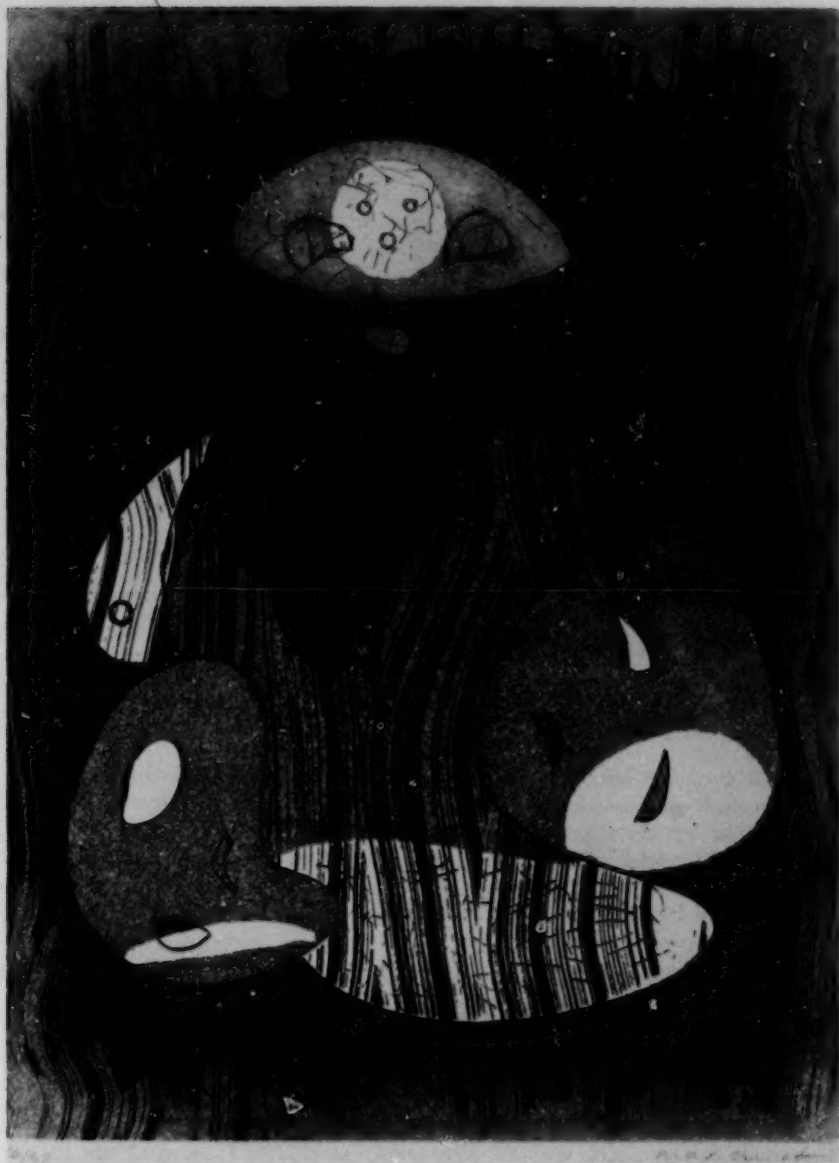
Man Ray 1948

34 Photograph



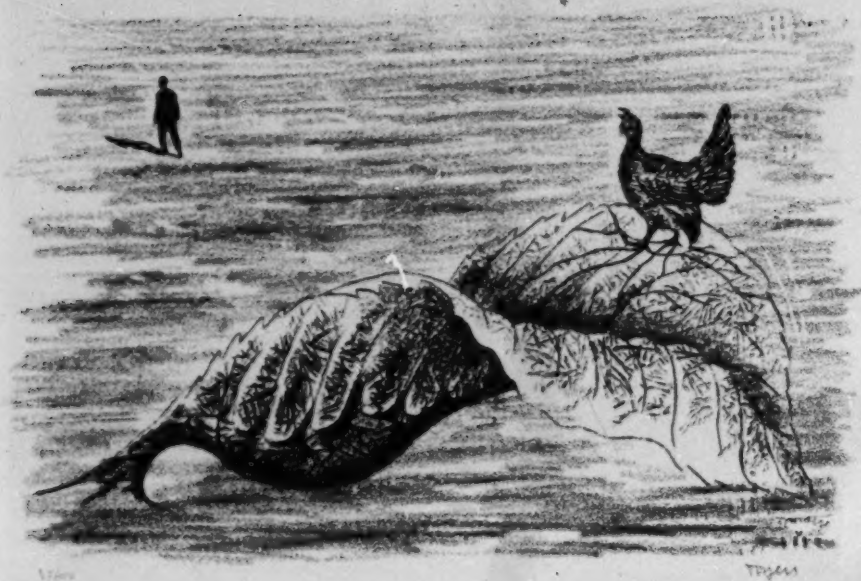
Matta c. 1948

29 Black crayon



Max Ernst 1950

12 Etching



Toyen c. 1950

38 Color lithograph

CATALOGUE

Arp, Hans Jean (1887-1966)

1. *Etching, 1935, from the album 23 Gravures with a preface by Anatole Jakovsky, Orobitz, Paris, 1935. Edition: 50, signed (Arp's and two other work in the album were unnumbered). 8 1/2" x 10 3/8".

2. Woodcut, c. 1950. Edition: unknown, signed. 4 7/8" x 7 7/8".

Bellmer, Hans (1902-)

3. *Etching in green and red, 1947, contained in *Le Surréalisme en 1947*, Maeght, Paris, 1947. Edition: 999. Twenty two other exhibitors contributed original prints. 7 7/8" x 9 1/8".

Brauner, Victor (1903-1966)

4. *Ink and encaustic on beige paper, 1945, signed and dated. 6 11/16" x 9 7/8".

5. *Two etchings printed on one sheet, 1947, watercolored by the artist (entire edition), from the album *Brunidor 2*, Robert Altman, Paris, 1947-52. Edition: 110, signed and dated. *Brunidor 2* also contained works by Léger, Masson, Toyen, Hérold, Hélion and Michaux, all justified to 100 examples except Brauner's and Masson's (80). 5" x 6 5/8" each etching.

Dali, Salvador (1904-)

6. *Pencil, c. 1933, signed in ink and dated. This drawing is tipped into a copy of *Nuits Partagées* by Paul Eluard, GLM, Paris, 1935, the first in the series *Repères* (Signals). The book contains reproductions of two drawings by Dali for which this drawing is a study, apparently an early conception of an important Dali theme. The copy of *Nuits Partagées*, limited to 70 numbered copies, is marked H. C. and signed by the editor Guy Levis-Mano and by Paul Eluard. 7" x 7 3/4".

7. *Etching with remarks, 1934, from *Chant V, Les Chants de Maldoror* by Comte de Lautréamont (Isidore Ducasse), Skira, Paris, 1934. Adulated by the surrealists, Lautréamont rarely speaks positively. In one instance he lauds the perfection of mathematics and the pure goddesses of its disciplines, for which Dali has introduced his own cynicism in this illustration. Edition: 105; suites with remarks: 40, all plates normally unsigned. Because of finances, Skira could print only half of the justified 210 copies. The plates with remarks differ in several dimensions from their corresponding trimmed illustrations in the book. 7 1/4" x 11 3/4".

8. *Etching, 1934, from *Chant III, Les Chants de Maldoror* (see 7 for details). This illustration refers to remarks on the Creator and recalls Lautréamont's phrase: The chance meeting of an umbrella and a sewing machine on a dissecting table. 6 1/2" x 8 5/8".

Dominguez, Oscar (1906-1958)

9. *Entrée de Taurine*, 1949, color lithograph. Edition: 200, signed, numbered 12 5/8" x 18 7/8".

* Reproduced. Dimensions are listed as width x height. For drawings, paper size is given; for lithographs, approximate image size; for etchings, plate size.

Ernst, Max (1891-)

10. *Starfish, c. 1926, pencil frottage. The starfish was not included among Ernst's reproduced frottages in *Histoire Naturelle* (1925), but it was a favorite theme. Signed. 7 5/8" x 4".

11. *Correspondances Dangereuses (also known as *Ecole d'Oiseaux*), 1947, etching, from the album *Brunidor 1*, Robert Altman, New York-Paris, 1947. Edition: 70, signed. This album also contained works by Lam, Matta, Miro, Tanguy, Seligman and Hayter. Hugues/Poupard-Lieussou 318. 8 3/4" x 11 3/4".

12. *Composition (Maternité), 1950, etching and aquatint. Edition: 33, signed. Hugues/Poupard-Lieussou 345. 8 3/4" x 11 3/4".

Fini, Léonor (1908-)

13. Ink, c. 1947, signed study for an illustration for Sade's *Julliette*. 7 3/8" x 9 1/2".

Giacometti, Alberto (1901-1966)

14. *Three etchings, 1947, illustrating *Histoire des Rats* by Georges Bataille, Editions de Minuit, 1947. While Giacometti's surrealist period was in the early 1930s, his illustrations of the depraved characters of *Histoire des Rats* indicates he had not lost his surrealist orientation, and he illustrated several works by surrealists from 1947 to his death. Georges Bataille also was not an adherent of the surrealists, but his work met or exceeded their standards of scandal and protest from 1928 when Masson illustrated his *Histoire de l'Oeil*. Edition: 200, unsigned. The first forty copies contained a suite of three refused etchings. One of the first 40 in deluxe wraps but lacking the suite. Engleberts 57. 3 1/4" x 4 7/8", approx. each.

Hérolt, Jacques (1910-)

15. *Lithograph in colors, c. 1948, from *Brunidor 2* (see 5 for details). Edition: 100, signed, numbered, 11 1/4" x 15".

Lam, Wifredo (1902-)

16. *Ink, 1945, signed and dated. Lam lived mostly in Spain for twenty years, returning to his native Cuba in 1941 at which time he developed his "jungle" iconography. 6 5/8" x 9 1/2".

17. *Ink on brown paper, signed and dated 9-1-46, Haiti, and inscribed to Dr. Weuslof, New York, 1946. Lam traveled around the Caribbean islands with Breton with whom he found an interest in voodoo ideas. 20" x 24 1/2".

18. *Quetzal, 1947, color lithograph, from the album *Brunidor 1* (see 11 for details). Edition: 70, signed, numbered and titled. 12 7/8" x 16 1/2".

Masson, André (1896-)

19. *Ink, 1925, signed in pencil. This is an "automatic" drawing, so labeled by Masson, that is, very quickly done but well structured, usually hinting at subconscious images, in this case erotic but not always so. 9 1/4" x 12 1/2".

20. Ink, 1927, initialed. Lacking those Freudian hints of 19, although exhibiting similar spontaneity, this drawing is more "surrealist" and relates to an etching of 1926 for Desnos', *C'est les bottes de sept lieues*, cette phrase: Je me vois. 9 1/4" x 12 1/2".

21. *Etching, 1938, from the album *Solidarité* with a poem by Paul Eluard, GLM; Paris, 1938. Picasso, Miro, Tanguy, Hayter, Wright and Husband also contributed to this album edited to aid orphans of the Spanish Civil War. Masson had lived in Spain from 1934 to 1936 and his etching best of all accompanies the despair and fury of Eluard's words. Edition: 150 plus several hors commerce (H.C.), signed and numbered. 4 1/4" x 3 1/8".

22. *The Young Man and Death, 1943, ink. This drawing modifies the highly stylized drawings Masson did in 1941 called *Death (Anatomy of my Universe, Curt Valentin, 1943, p. 42)* and *Assassination of the Automaton or the Double (Andre Masson and his Universe by M. Leiris and G. Limbour, Trois Collines, Geneva, 1947, p. 68, misreferenced as from Anatomy of my Universe)*. Much of Masson's graphic work during World War II reflects his despair over the holocaust. Initialed. 9 3/4" x 12 1/4".

23. Rodeo, 1943, etching. Both the American environment and etching techniques as practiced in Hayter's Atelier 17 in New York during the war gave Masson an opportunity to metamorphose his surrealist imagery into fauna and flora, a tendency which became total for a few years about 1950. Rodeo—bull-fight American-style—retains dark hints of Spain and of the Minotaur. Edition: 50, signed and numbered. 9 3/4" x 12 1/4".

24. *The Great Larva, 1945, lithograph, from the album *Bestiare*, 1946, edition: 135, unsigned. Masson's *Bestiary* is a surrealist one depicting "the imposition of the powerful upon the weakness of the wise." The Great Larva is the first of twelve lithographs with its implication of the metamorphosis of nature and man into evil society and oppressed humanity. Signed proof on the Strathmore paper used in the album but without the printed title. A number of signed proofs on smaller-sized Rives paper also were made. 9 3/8" x 12 3/8".

Magritte, René (1898-1967)

25. *Collegiate de Pataphysicians, pencil, c. 1945. The theme of the woman rising from the flames first appeared in the 1940s. 6 3/4" x 8 1/8". Private collection.

Matta, Roberto (Echuarren) (1902-)

26. *Study for a psychological morphology, c. 1937-39, colored crayon and pencil. Possible Matta signature and French custom stamp on reverse. 8 3/4" x 10 1/4".

27. Ink on brown paper, c. 1946. At about this time, Matta abandoned the psychological morphologies and started to become "the painter of the society." This drawing is possibly one of the first appearances of his observations of violence. 4 3/4" x 6 3/8".

28. *I want to see it to believe it, 1947, color lithograph, from the album *Brunidor 1* (See 11 for details). Edition: 70, signed, numbered. 12 3/4" x 12".

29. *Crayon, c. 1948, possibly a study for *St. Michael*. 9 1/4" x 12 3/8".

Miro, Joan (1893-)

30. *Stencil in colors, 1934, from *Cahiers d'Art*, 1-4, 1934. Signed and dated edition of 48. Wember III. 9 3/4" x 12 5/8". Private collection.

31. *Etching on cut and pasted paper, 1938, frontispiece for *Sablier Couché* by Alice Paalen, Editions Sagesse, 1938. Miro cut the yellow paper in a different way for each etching. It was then pasted down and the etching pulled. Edition: 75, signed and numbered. The book is dedicated by Alice Paalen to Pierre Mabille and bound by Leroux in red leather and pasted wood. Wember VI (erroneously "Casse-Nuit") 6" x 8" (whole page).

32. *Woman and bird before the moon, 1947, etching, from the album, *Laurels*, New York, 1947. Edition: 300, signed, numbered, dated. Wember XIV. 6 3/4" x 4 3/8".

Picasso, Pablo (1881-)

33. *Etching, 1943, loose frontispiece for *Contrée* by Robert Desnos, Robert-J. Godet, Paris, 1943. Sections of this etching were reproduced to decorate the poems. Like other art publications during the German occupation, *Contrée* was "against," although not obviously so (the title means country or stretch of land, but becomes a play on words). Picasso illustrated several of these by surrealist poets. Edition: 210. The first ten copies have additional prints in colors. Bloch 362. 5" x 9 5/8".

Man Ray (1890-)

34. *Photograph, included with the first 125 copies of *To Be Continued Unnoticed*, Copley Gallery, Beverly Hills, 1948. Signed and numbered, printed offset. 5 3/8" x 9 3/16".

Seligmann, Kurt (1900-1962)

35. *Démolitions Hivernales*, c. 1931, etching. 7" x 8 3/4".

36. *Acteon, 1947, etching, from the album *Brunidor 1* (see 11 for details). Acteon was metamorphosed into a stag, according to Ovid. Edition: 70, signed and numbered. 9 7/8" x 11 3/4".

Tanguy, Yves (1900-1955)

37. *Etching, 1936, frontispiece for *A Mème la Terre* by Alice Paalen, Editions Surréaliste, Paris, 1936. 35 copies of the book contained the etching on China paper. Artist's proof on bluish gray paper dedicated to H. Putzel. Signed. 2 1/2" x 4 1/8".

Toyen (1902-)

38. *Lithograph in colors, c. 1950, from the album *Brunidor 2* (see 5 for details). Edition: 100, signed and numbered. 16 5/8" x 12 3/4".



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